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FINAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1116 (1997) of 27 June 1997 and contains an account of developments in Liberia since my last report, dated 13 August 1997 (S/1997/643), including an update on discussions relating to Liberia taken at the summit meeting of States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held at Abuja on 28 and 29 August 1997.

II. POLITICAL ASPECTS

2. Following his inauguration on 2 August 1997, President Charles Taylor formed a new Government and announced a policy of reconciliation and national unity. The Government has begun to establish and consolidate its authority throughout the country, and a reconstituted Supreme Court has been sworn in. Superintendents have been appointed for all 13 Liberian counties, and the Liberia National Police is preparing to re-open police stations across the country.

3. The Government has indicated that it will give priority to the reconstruction of Liberia's war-torn economy, infrastructure and institutions, and that efforts would soon be launched to revive the productive sectors of the economy. UNOMIL has provided the Government with information on the condition of roads, bridges, schools, clinics and other infrastructure in the countryside, as well as detailed maps, to assist it in these efforts. The Government has indicated that it inherited an empty treasury, a domestic debt of some $200 million and an external debt of more than $2 billion.

4. On 27 August, President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana paid a one-day working visit to Liberia, during which he expressed concern that the situation in Sierra Leone might have an adverse impact on the fragile peace in Liberia. He also stressed the need for the international community to provide reconstruction assistance to Liberia. In a joint communiqué issued at the end of his visit, Presidents Rawlings and Taylor announced their agreement to strengthen

cooperation in Liberia's reconstruction and to establish economic and trade missions in their respective capitals.

5. The United Nations was invited to attend, as an observer, the summit meeting of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS held at Abuja. Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, attended as my Special Envoy, together with my Special Representative for Liberia, Mr. Tuliameni Kalomoh, and the Chief Military Observer of UNOMIL, Major-General Sikander Shami. After considering recommendations from the meeting of ECOWAS Chiefs of Staff and the meeting of ECOWAS Foreign Ministers, which preceded the Summit on 26 and 27 August, respectively, the Heads of State decided to lift all sanctions and embargoes on Liberia, and called on the international community to do the same. They also agreed to extend the stay of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia to help consolidate and strengthen security in the country, and to assist with the restructuring and training of the Armed Forces of Liberia, as well as the police and security services. They requested the ECOWAS secretariat to negotiate the appropriate protocols with the Government of Liberia so as to place on a sound legal footing future ECOWAS assistance to Liberia. The ECOWAS leaders decided that the costs of the continuing ECOMOG presence in Liberia would be borne by the Government of Liberia, but called on States members of ECOWAS and the international community to assist Liberia in this regard. They also appealed for international support for the reconstruction of the country.

III. MILITARY ASPECTS

6. The security situation in Liberia remained calm during the reporting period. The situation in Sierra Leone, however, remains a potential threat to the security and stability of Liberia. President Taylor has charged that former ULIMO-K fighters are involved in the conflict in Sierra Leone. This charge has been challenged by Alhaji Kromah, the former leader of the disbanded ULIMO-K faction, who has asserted that since all armed factions were disbanded, any Liberian ex-fighters involved in the Sierra Leone conflict were doing so on their own. Allegations that the Sierra Leonean Kamajors are operating in areas along the border with Liberia, and crossing into areas of Grand Cape Mount county, are also of concern.

7. There is also widespread concern among Liberians about the recent spate of armed robberies in Monrovia and its environs. ECOMOG is working with the Liberia National Police, which is unarmed, in efforts to suppress violent crime. The number of ECOMOG checkpoints in Monrovia has been considerably reduced and the curfew is now in force only from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. Some of the remaining checkpoints are being manned jointly by ECOMOG and the Liberia National Police.

8. The Mission has closed all its field offices and withdrawn all personnel and assets to Monrovia in readiness for its departure from Liberia. Nearly all military observers have now been repatriated. However, it has been decided to retain nine military observers until 30 September (see annex), in connection with the joint ECOMOG/UNOMIL custody of the approximately 10,000 weapons and 1.24 million pieces of ammunition surrendered by factional fighters during the disarmament and demobilization exercise, which ended in February 1997. My

Special Representative has requested ECOWAS to discuss with the Government of Liberia the post-UNOMIL custody arrangements and the final disposal of the weapons. A decision is yet to be taken on this matter. The military observers remaining in Liberia will be available to assist in sorting and classifying the weapons and ammunition, should a decision to do so be taken by ECOWAS and the Government of Liberia before the expiry of the mandate of UNOMIL.

IV. HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS

9. The humanitarian situation in Liberia remains largely unchanged. Access to major parts of the country, particularly in the north and the south-east, remains limited owing to the poor condition of roads caused by the rainy season.

10. Humanitarian organizations have continued to provide assistance in areas of need. The World Health Organization and its partners are carrying on a vaccination campaign against yellow fever in Lofa County and intend to investigate reports of new outbreaks of the disease in that county. The United Nations Children's Fund has continued its water and sanitation activities and the provision of assistance to children and war-affected women. Its education activities have intensified with the start of the school year.

11. Planning for resettlement of internally displaced persons is under way. The World Food Programme (WFP) and its non-governmental organization partners have begun a detailed assessment of internally displaced persons in Monrovia and its environs as part of preparations for the upcoming resettlement programme. WFP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and donors have scheduled a meeting for 17 to 19 September at Abidjan to review the regional food aid strategy developed in April 1997 in view of the changing situation in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has continued to supply agricultural inputs to farmers and to assist the Government in drawing up a master plan for agriculture.

12. As the security situation has remained stable, Liberian refugees have continued to return voluntarily to the country, albeit in limited numbers. The inflow is expected to increase once the rainy season is over. UNHCR is preparing an organized repatriation programme. Sierra Leonean asylum seekers continue to cross into Liberia along the whole length of the border. UNHCR, together with the Government and its non-governmental organization partners, is monitoring and catering to the emergency needs of Sierra Leoneans arriving in accessible areas.

13. The United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office was established in November 1995 to fulfil two tasks: the coordination of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the demobilization and initial reintegration of former combatants into civilian life. The Office has completed the latter function, but members of the humanitarian community agree that there remains a need for its continued presence and for humanitarian coordination. If sufficient funding is made available by donors, the Office will continue to coordinate humanitarian assistance activities as part of an overall integrated peace-building strategy. Consultations are currently being conducted with United Nations partners, non-governmental organizations and donor

representatives on the handover of responsibilities to the United Nations Development Programme at the end of December 1997.

V. HUMAN RIGHTS

14. No major violations of human rights were reported to UNOMIL during the reporting period. UNOMIL is, however, closely monitoring the human rights situation, especially in and around Monrovia. Police investigations into several recent incidents have led to the arrest of three members of the Liberia National Police and a member of Liberia Special Security Services. UNOMIL has also noted the prompt action taken by the Government in dismissing three immigration officers found guilty of illegally arresting, detaining and beating a foreign national in Monrovia. The composition and mandate of President Taylor's proposed Human Rights Commission are yet to be announced, though the President has provided assurances that the Commission would be an independent body established by law with a mandate to investigate and report on abuses for appropriate action to be taken by the Government.

VI. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

15. The resource requirements for the liquidation and closing of UNOMIL are currently being finalized and will be presented to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-second session.

16. As at 31 August 1997, a total of $115,079,147 had been assessed on Member States for the operation of UNOMIL for the period from inception to 30 September 1997, of which $96,625,319 has been received, resulting in a shortfall of $18,453,828 in contributions. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at 15 August 1997 was $1,992 million.

17. With regard to the Trust Fund for the Implementation of the Cotonou Agreement in Liberia, total contributions received as at 31 August 1997 amounted to some $25.6 million, with authorized expenditure amounting to some $25.6 million.

VII. UNITED NATIONS PRESENCE AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL OF UNOMIL

18. On 2 September, my Special Envoy and my Special Representative for Liberia held follow-up discussions with President Taylor regarding arrangements for a continued United Nations presence in Liberia following the withdrawal of UNOMIL. President Taylor reiterated his support for such a presence, and welcomed my proposal to establish a small United Nations office in Liberia. The head of this office would be the focal point for post-conflict peace-building activities of the United Nations in Liberia and have overall authority for coordination of the United Nations system in the country.

19. Prior to meeting with President Taylor in Monrovia, my Special Envoy and my Special Representative met at Abuja with the Liberian Ministers of Finance and

Economic Planning to discuss issues relating to the mobilization of resources for rehabilitation and economic recovery. The meeting focused on the importance of establishing an appropriate framework for the recovery process and on the need for close cooperation among all partners. It was agreed that Liberians should be actively involved in all aspects of the recovery process, especially with respect to the prioritizing of goals and projects. My Special Envoy emphasized that in mobilizing international support for reconstruction and development, it would be important for the Government to give a clear and early indication of its own strategy for mobilizing national resources for the recovery process, as well as its plans for transforming the factionalized economy into a genuinely national economy.

20. In order to capitalize on the momentum generated by the successful completion of the Abuja peace process and to strengthen peace-building efforts in Liberia, I have decided to reconvene the Special Conference on Liberia, at ministerial level, on 3 October 1997 in New York. It is anticipated that President Taylor will address the meeting, and that the President will take the opportunity to provide an indication of his Government's preliminary priorities and strategic vision for recovery.

VIII. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

21. The expiry of the current mandate of UNOMIL will bring to a close, after four years, an operation whose successful conclusion was long delayed and often in doubt. To the extent that its ultimate success was due to the cooperation established between ECOWAS and its peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, the United Nations and its observer mission, UNOMIL, and bilateral and multilateral donors, the operation deserves further study. The lessons learned in UNOMIL and their application to current and possible future missions of a similar kind are therefore now being carefully examined.

22. UNOMIL was deployed for an initial period of seven months in September 1993 pursuant to Security Council resolution 866 (1993). The mission was established in the context of a war that had claimed the lives of as many as 150,000 civilians and driven some 700,000 Liberians to flee to neighbouring countries as refugees. ECOWAS efforts to resolve the conflict had led to the creation of ECOMOG with 4,000 troops in August 1990. UNOMIL was therefore the first United Nations peacekeeping mission undertaken in cooperation with a peacekeeping operation already established by another organization. The Security Council has since established a number of other operations in close relationship with regional organizations.

23. The conflict in Liberia was essentially a power struggle with some ethnic elements, but the command and control exercised by faction leaders over their commanders and troops in the field was often loose. The central government, law and order, and physical infrastructure of Liberia had been either seriously degraded or had disappeared altogether. As a result, the fighting was characterized by widespread lawlessness, the easy availability of small arms and gross violations of human rights by all factions against innocent civilians.

24. Numerous attempts were made at the regional level to resolve the conflict through peaceful means. ECOWAS brokered a series of peace agreements, including the Yamoussoukro Accord of October 1991, the Cotonou Agreement of July 1993, the Akosombo Agreement of September 1994, the Accra Agreement of December 1994 and the Abuja Agreement of August 1995, which provided for a cease-fire, disarmament and elections to be held in August 1996.

25. Despite the progress made towards the implementation of the Abuja Agreement, the violence that erupted in Monrovia in April and May 1996 was a devastating blow to the peace process. Yet the tide began to turn for the better after the crisis of April-May 1996.

26. In my predecessor's report to the Security Council on the establishment of UNOMIL, dated 9 September 1993 (S/26422), it was noted that the success of this innovative model of peacekeeping, and the ability of UNOMIL to carry out its mandate, rested on the assumption that ECOMOG would be provided with the resources needed to perform the wide-ranging tasks entrusted to it by the Liberian parties. However, sufficient resources were made available only after the tragedy of April-May 1996. It also took those tragic events for the warring parties finally to decide to seek a resolution to the conflict through peaceful means and to give the Liberian people the opportunity to designate a Government of their choice. In addition, the creation of the mediation team, composed of ECOWAS, UNOMIL and the diplomatic community in Liberia, to help resolve the crisis and put the Abuja Agreement back on track, was a significant development in strengthening the capacity of the international community to assist in bringing peace to Liberia.

27. The successful completion of the disarmament and demobilization exercise, which began in November 1996 and ended in February 1997 with the surrender to ECOMOG under UNOMIL observation of about 10,000 weapons and 1.24 million pieces of ammunition, marked a significant turn of events in Liberia. As ECOMOG deployed throughout Liberia to carry out the disarmament exercise, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and donors were in a position to extend humanitarian assistance to increasing numbers of Liberians in emergency need of food, shelter and medical care. The initial reintegration programmes established following the end of the disarmament exercise were crucial in providing useful employment to thousands of former fighters and war-affected populations as a means both of restoring social stability and of rehabilitating some of the country's basic infrastructure.

28. The restoration of a climate of security, ensured by the widespread deployment of ECOMOG, was crucial to holding the elections. Great credit is due to the firmness and effectiveness shown by ECOWAS and ECOMOG to ensure the successful organization and conduct of the elections. This success was also made possible by the financial support made available both by bilateral contributions from interested States and through the United Nations Trust Fund for Liberia.

29. The Special Conference to Support the Peace Process in Liberia, an initiative originally launched by the Minister for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, Mr. Jan Pronk, was the focus for a great deal of the assistance provided to Liberia and ECOMOG. Successive meetings of the Special Conference,

most recently at Geneva on 12 June 1997, helped generate the substantial pledges of assistance from individual Governments which did so much to ensure the success of the peace process and the preparations for the elections.

30. The role of UNOMIL itself in the organization and conduct of the elections should not be overlooked. Although, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1020 (1995) of 10 November 1995, the mandate of UNOMIL was to observe and verify the elections, UNOMIL in fact played a much more significant role. UNOMIL's technical expertise and logistical, transportation and communications assets were extensively placed at the disposal of the Liberian Independent Elections Commission, the body responsible for the organization and conduct of the elections. Furthermore, UNOMIL trained and deployed 200 electoral observers sent by the United Nations, and coordinated the activities of those observers with those of the many other international observers deployed during the polling period. My Special Representative also represented me on the Joint Electoral Coordination Mechanism, established with ECOWAS to keep the electoral process on track and certify the results. UNOMIL's countrywide public information campaign, conducted through radio and the print media, did much to assist voter education.

31. The human rights activities of UNOMIL also played an important role in the peace process. In addition to investigating atrocities such as the Sinje massacre in Grand Cape Mount County in September 1996, human rights officers provided advice and assistance to Liberian human rights organizations in an effort to build local capacity.

32. I wish to place on record my deep appreciation to my Special Representative for Liberia, Mr. Tuliameni Kalomoh, for bringing to a successful conclusion this complex and difficult mission. My gratitude also goes to Mr. Kalomoh's two predecessors, Mr. Anthony B. Nyakyi and Mr. Trevor L. Gordon-Somers, as well as to the current Chief Military Observer, Major-General Sikander Shami, and his predecessors and to all those who have served with UNOMIL since its inception.

33. The repatriation of UNOMIL staff is under way and is progressing satisfactorily. My Special Representative and his immediate staff are expected to leave Liberia on or before 30 September. Thereafter, a small team will remain in Liberia to complete the usual liquidation and closing process.

34. The establishment of a United Nations office in Liberia will assist the Government and people of Liberia in the long process of reconstruction and national reconciliation. It is my hope that the international community will demonstrate the same spirit of cooperation, generosity and goodwill in addressing the problems of post-UNOMIL Liberia as they have in helping to ensure the success of the United Nations observer mission and the elections which served as its culminating point.

Annex

Composition of the military component of UNOMIL
as at 10 September 1997

	Military observers
Bangladesh	1
China	-
Czech Republic	-
Egypt	1
India	1
Kenya	2
Malaysia	-
Nepal	1
Pakistan	3[a]
Uruguay	-
Total	9[b]

[a] Including the Chief Military Observer.

[b] All military observers will be repatriated by 30 September 1997.

UNOMIL
Deployment as of
15 September 1997
Mission Headquarters
International boundary
County boundary
National capital
County capital
Airport
0 20 40 60 80 km
0 10 20 30 40 50 mi
The bounderies and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
SIERRA LEONE
GUINEA
LIBERIA
CÔTE D' IVOIRE
Atlantic Ocean
Guéckédou
Mendekoma
Voinjama
Kolahun
Kailahun
Pendembu
Vahun
Zigida
Yella
Zorzor
Nzerekoré
Irié
Kenema
Gelahun
Yekepa
Saniquellie
Danané
Pujehun
Kongo
Wiesua
Belle Yella
Belefuanai
Bendaja
Gbange
Camp Nama
Gahnpa (Ganta)
Kahnple
Sulima
Bopolu
Saw Mill
Tubmanburg
Gbarnga
Palala
Kpein
Sagleipie
Suakoko
Zienzu
Yela
Butlo
Robertsport
Vonzuahn
Lake Piso
Suehn
Todee
Zekera
Kpeaple
Toulepleu
Guiglo
Brewerville
Careysburg
Virginia
Tapeta
Gboyi
Monrovia
Harbel
Marshall
SOS Village
Guata
Tobli
Kola (Kola Town)
Towabli (Towai Town)
Poabli
Camp Scheiffelin
Hartford
Debli
Tchien (Zwedru)
Edina
Buchanan
Trade Town
Ghapo
Gonglee
Babu
Drubo (Dubwe)
Tai
Duabo
Galo
Timbo
Bokoa
Shabli
Pelokehn
River Cess
Juazohn
Yakakahn
Yibuke (Kaobli)
Tiehnpo
Kanweaken
Kopo
Sehnkwehn
Tatuke
Greenville
Tawake
Kodeke
Nyaake
Nana Kru
Barclayville
Sasstown
Grand Cess
Nemeke
Plibo
Tabou
Harper
C. Palmas
MONTSERRADO
GRAND CAPE MOUNT
BOMI
MARGIBI
GRAND BASSA
RIVER CESS
GRAND GEDEH
SINOE
GRAND KRU
MARYLAND
LOFA
BONG
NIMBA
Mano
Lofa
Saint Paul
St John
Cavally
Sassandra
Niandia
Wologizi Range
Nimba Range
Mt. Wuteve
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